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THE CHARTER: CONDITIONS OF DIFFUSE SOCIALIZATION IN SCHOOLS*

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ABSTRACT

The effects of a school on diffuse attributes of students such as their values are seen as produced by the wider social definition of the products of the school--here called its charter. Schools or systems of schools which are chartered to confer major status gains and entry into diffusely-defined elites are seen as more likely to have broad effects on their students. Organizational conditions, however, may mediate this overall effect of the relationship between a school and its surrounding social environment.

THE CHARTER:
CONDITIONS OF DIFFUSE SOCIALIZATION IN SCHOOLS

Research on the ways in which organizations socialize people has been primarily concerned with one major problem: What features of the structure of organizations which process people, and of the interaction that goes on within them, lead to diffuse changes in the values or orientation of the people being processed? Thus the independent variables are such properties as the size or isolation of colleges. The dependent variables typically include diffuse attributes of students such as their liberalism, their tolerance, or their authoritarianism.*

This concern with organizational socialization as major restructuring of the individual through the internal impact of the organization alone has led to an odd emphasis in the research literature. Interest focuses, to an unusual degree, on extreme and total organizational settings as loci of socialization. Thus, the studies most commonly referred to cover a concentration camp, a prisoner of war camp, a military academy, an isolated and

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*In this respect, American colleges are studied more often than other institutions in this general category. Theodore Newcomb's famous Bennington study provided much impetus. See his Personality and Social Change, New York: Dryden Press, 1943, and his "Attitude development as a function of reference groups," in Maccoby et al., eds, Readings in Social Psychology, New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1958, pp. 265-275. The research which followed this lead is briefly reviewed in Philip Jacob, Changing Values in College, New York: Harper and Brothers, 1957, and very completely summarized in a thorough, new review by Theodore Newcomb and Kenneth Feldman, The Impact of Colleges Upon Their Students, a report to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, 1968.

politicized college, two medical schools, and a mental hospital.* This is true in a historical period in which socializing organizations (schools in particular) are moving in just the opposite direction--becoming more open, more flexible, integrated and interpenetrated with their surroundings.

A previous paper commented on the dependent variable in the research equation--the inclination to study diffuse aspects of the organization's clients (such as their values) as the central outputs of the socialization process.** It was argued that some of the crucial consequences of the socialization of students in complex societies involve their allocation to various specialized roles in the social order, and that these decisions as to where a given student will be socially located may be more significant than the changes in his values or tastes, and may be affected by quite different processes.

In this paper, we reconceptualize the nature of the independent variable in the standard research equation. Our central argument is that an organization's impact on the values (or, for that matter, on other properties) of the people it processes may be less affected by the structure of the organization itself than by its relation with and definition in its larger social

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*Bruno Bettelheim, "Individual and mass behavior in extreme situations," and Edgar Schein, "The Chinese indoctrination for prisoners of war: a study of attempted brainwashing," in Maccoby et al., op. cit., pp. 300-334; Sanford M. Dornbusch, "The military academy as an assimilating institution," Social Forces, 33 (1955), pp. 316-321; Newcomb, op. cit.; Robert K. Merton, George G. Reader, M. D., and Patricia Kendall, The Student-Physician, Chicago: Free Press, 1957; Howard S. Becker, Blanche Geer, and Everett C. Hughes, Boys in White: Student Culture in the Medical School, University of Chicago Press, 1961; Erving Goffman, "The characteristics of total institutions," in Goffman, Asylums, Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1961, pp. 1-124.

**John Meyer, Some Non-Value Effects of Colleges, Columbia University: Bureau of Applied Social Research, 1965.

context. In particular, we argue that the effectiveness of a socializing organization is dependent on its charter--the agreed on social definition of its products. For example, a school whose graduates are generally understood to become members of an elite with broadly-defined powers will have much greater impact on the values of its students than will a school whose graduates are defined as eligible for more limited technical roles.

We go on, then, to consider the consequences for diffuse socialization of the social charter of a school or other socializing organizations. Before we take up this major problem, however, we need briefly to define (a) what we mean by diffuse socialization, and (b) what significant motivational features we need to attribute to socializees.

A. Diffuse Socialization: It is conventional to distinguish three kinds of broad or diffuse socialization--shifts in an individual's (1) values, or cultural desiderata; (2) personality needs or drives, and (3) significant social roles, or identities, or self-conceptions. These distinctions, of course, rest on established distinctions between the cultural system, the personality system, and the social system. Intellectually, they make sense. For most research purposes they seem at present to be unnecessary, since the processes by which they are affected are thought to be very similar. More important, methodologically it is difficult to distinguish among them. Thus, Plant finds reductions in the level of authoritarianism of San Jose State College students over their four years of attendance.* This could reflect changes in the features of the personality system which authoritarianism

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*Walter T. Plant, Personality Changes Associated With a College Education, U.S. Office of Education, Cooperative Research Project #348, 1962.

scales were originally constructed to measure. The finding could reflect value changes in the students as they came in contact with, and identified with the tolerance languages and ethics of middle-class American culture. The finding could also reflect adaptation by the students to the role-perspectives of the middle-class Americans they are becoming, or even simply the adults and full-fledged members of society they are becoming. This latter possibility is suggested by Plant's finding that applicants to San Jose State College who did not attend the school also lowered their scores on authoritarianism.

Any of these changes may be captured by empirical findings of changes in authoritarianism, liberalism, and so on. In measurement, there is no way to sharply separate value components from personality components or role-taking. Further, sociological thinking about these components suggests they are constructed and changed by similar socialization processes.*

Thus, in our discussion, we consider these types of socialization under a common heading--diffuse socialization--and do not talk about them separately. From our perspective the taking on of allocated roles is the crucial feature of organizational socialization. Value and motivational components clearly go along with this process and there is no need to distinguish them.

By diffuse socialization, then, we mean the acquisition by individuals of qualities which will guide a considerable range of their behavior--

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*For example, see the various essays on socialization by Talcott Parsons: "Family structure and the socialization of the child," in Parsons and Bales, Family, Socialization and Interaction Process, Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1955, chapter 2; or "Social structure and the development of personality," in Bert Kaplan, ed., Studying Personality Cross-Culturally, New York: Harper & Row, 1961, pp. 165-199; and others. In his thinking, value, motivational, and role or positional attributes of individuals are socialized in similar ways and at roughly the same points in time.

behavior in differing contexts and vis-a-vis different social others. We use this idea in contrast to specific or technical learning.

B. Motivational Features of Socializees: In order to discuss the conditions under which clients will take on diffuse qualities, we need to describe briefly the two motivational orientations which we (in common with most of the literature) attribute to them. (1) Individuals are motivated to adopt those qualities which are associated with more valued definitions of themselves and which are associated with more valued futures. Thus greater prospective gains in social status or value lead to more socialization. This idea, of course, is related to the sociological tradition of thinking of the individual as maximizer of social profit. (2) Individuals are motivated to take on those qualities which are related to widely-legitimated definitions of themselves and of their futures. Thus, the more clearly defined an individual's future position, and the more it is socially agreed that he will acquire that position, the more likely he is to take on the attributes of that position. This idea is associated with the intellectual tradition of conceiving of the individual's action as oriented to social order--as conforming to the definitions of himself and his proper behavior held by others.

With these two motivational ideas in hand, we go on to discuss how individuals acquire from socializing organizations those qualities which the organizations are socially chartered to confer upon them.*

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*Obviously, the discussion above by no means covers the problem of the social psychology of the socializee. For example, under the heading of anticipatory socialization, there have been some discussions in the literature on reference groups of how an individual may acquire qualities of desirable groups of which he is not, but hopes to become, a member. See Robert K. Merton and Alice S. Rossi, "Contributions to the theory of reference group

I. Societal Conditions: The Charter

Discussions of the effects of socializing organizations often make some hidden assumptions. They look for effects of internal organizational features such as rates of interaction, social climate, or size. Interaction between socializers and socializees in these settings, however, is enormously conditioned by the understanding both parties have of the wider standing of the institution in society--what social position it can guarantee its clients in society, or what future it can hold out to them. Thus thinking and research about organizational effects include effects the organization has by virtue of its charter in the larger society.

Thus, in studies of "college effects," a great many possibilities are simply evaded by bringing in the highly significant but unanalyzed word college into the picture. The word signifies that by virtue of their social charters (not their internal interaction) all of these institutions can offer their students guaranteed entry into the American middle-class occupational structure. Any qualities the students take on as a result of their prospective entry into these futures have resulted from the charter of the college, not

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behavior," in Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure, 2nd ed., Glencoe, Ill.: Free Press, 1957, especially pp. 265-268. We consider this problem from the point of view of the larger social order, which allocates various futures to socializees. By the assumptions above, we take it as given that socializees will anticipatorily adopt the qualities they are allocated. This perspective is also related to another point made by Merton--that social statuses are arranged in structured sequences, with connections between statuses being made, not only by the individuals holding them, but also by others. See, for example, Merton, op. cit., p. 385.

its internal structure.* It is further true that American colleges typically can only offer students entry into the occupation world. Broader social and cultural elites are almost absent or are so lacking in clear definition that colleges are not chartered to confer these memberships. We will later suggest that this lack of clearly defined elites in society rather than weaknesses of internal structure may account for the general failure of American colleges to produce much broad socialization.

We can visualize this point by imagining what the Bennington Study would have discovered about value changes created by the school if everyone involved--students, teachers, parents, and the wider community--had believed Bennington College to be a reform school for delinquent girls, from which the students would eventually graduate to a stigmatized social status. Even with the same students, the same teachers, and the same organization, it is obvious that the effects of the school would have been very different. The girls would probably have withdrawn in various ways from their status as members--perhaps into a defensive counter-culture--and would have been disinterested in the larger issues of national and world politics.

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*Thus, the charter is an attribute of an organization's relation to its environmental context, not its internal structure. This distinction is developed in Allen H. Barton, Organizational Measurement, New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1961. Such properties have not been emphasized much in discussions of organizational socialization. Their effects are usually seen to be mediated by internal features of the organization. Prestige and resources, for example, are usually thought to operate by providing higher quality socializers and greater organizational capability. The idea that they might operate directly, by defining the value of the organization's products, has not been given much discussion. See, for example, the thorough discussion of organizational socialization by Stanton Wheeler, "The structure of formally-organized socialization settings," in Orville G. Brim, Jr., and Stanton Wheeler, Socialization After Childhood: Two Essays, New York: Wiley, 1966. At several points (e.g., p. 81, and pp. 93-95) this study considers the organization's relation to its environment, but only as this affects such mediating variables as the amount and type of internal interaction.

How does this general effect occur? In this discussion we focus on its operation in schools or systems of schools, as specific and major instances of socializing organizations. The ideas are applicable to all kinds of socializing organizations.

Any socializing organization has crucial features which lie largely outside its own structure and which constitute its relationship with its social setting. One such feature--perhaps the most important--is the social definition of the products of the organization. If, for example, everyone knows that a particular school or class of schools (i.e., "colleges") produces successful people, and if they know that others--employers, professional gatekeepers--know and accept this, then the school has acquired an invaluable social resource in transforming its products. First, the holding power of a school which has desirable futures to offer is very great. Second, the steps in the required socialization process which the school presents to its students do not need to be legitimated with novel ideas located in the school, but can be defended with reference to the already validated futures to which they lead.

The power of a socializing organization or class of organizations to transform students depends on the increase in social value and the type of social position which it is chartered to confer on them. Schools which can provide entry into social elites have more power or leverage over their students than those which can confer less success. The status gain from a given school may be greater for students who come from lower status backgrounds, so the proposition must be formulated in terms of status gain

conferred by the organization. This is a minor point, since practically no young people in modern societies are themselves of high status.*

In the rest of this paper we apply this generalization in two ways. First, in this section, we consider how variations in school charters among societies will affect the kind of socialization which takes place within them. And second, in the last part of the paper, we consider how variations among school organizations may affect the implementation of any given charter.

Now we turn to two specific problems in the relation between societal characteristics and diffuse socialization: (a) Under what societal conditions will a school or class of schools have power to offer students entry into elites? (b) Under what societal conditions will this power be utilized to induce students to adopt new diffuse characteristics?

A. The structural Conditions of School Influence

In order to have great power over its students as a result of the status gains it can offer them, it is important that a school in fact be able to offer and implement the success of its students. But a closely

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*Even if they come from high status families, their own positions are much lower, since they contain only probabilities of future success, not established certainties, and these probabilities--even if conceived quite realistically by themselves and their associates--certainly add up for young people of any given generation to figures centered more closely around the status average than would be true of the range of defined status positions achieved by their parents. Also, and to some extent independently, membership in the adult world is conferred by the school system. Those who have not completed their education are still dependent on this system and in this sense of low status.

For these reasons, it seems likely that the simplest way of defining the status gain a school offers students is to take into account the social definition it is chartered to offer its products. Even though a reform school or prison may seem (to an observer) to offer great future gains to its devalued client, it is likely that compared to the alternative definitions of themselves and associated possible futures which they hold, that these organizations are quite weak.

related aspect is even more important. The students must <u>believe</u>, and think others believe, that the school has this power. The more it is widely understood and clearly symbolized that passage through a given school will ensure entry into an elite--and the more this power is seen widely legitimated--the more power the school will have over its students.

A number of societal features which increase the power of schools are involved here: (1) <u>The prestige and visibility of the elites to which schools lead</u>: It is easier for schools to establish their authority if they can transform students into members of distinctive elites with special names, styles of behavior, and legitimated prestige. Conversely, schools may be quite efficient in producing social mobility, as in American society, but if the classes and social positions into which their students go are not dramatized, their power is reduced. (In this respect American schools suffer from the same weaknesses as all American non-economic elites.)

In particular, the prestige of elites, and presumably the socializing power of the schools is influenced by the <u>relative size</u> of the elite to which given schools lead. If the elite is small, and positions in it are scarce relative to the number of aspirants, the power of the schools is increased. However, this power is again diffused if only a few of the students in the schools will succeed in attaining elite positions, as we shall note later on.

<u>(2) The degree to which the schools monopolize entry into all social elites</u>: If any kind of success to which a student or his family may aspire implies success in the schools, then failure in the schools immediately will be seen as blocking off other possibilities for success. On the other hand, if it is true (or believed) that non-academic virtues (strength, hard work, perseverance, piety, or courage) may readily produce success in the institutional order, the student is less dependent on the schools for the validation

of his success. He may instead refer to, emphasize, or invent other virtues in himself, and thus retain on a non-academic basis his possibilities for success.

(3) The directness of the publicly-understood association between the schools and elite entry: If completion of a given school is seen as almost by definition producing entry into an elite, the power of the school is, of course, greater. This is the case with entry into many professions in the United States, and entry into the civil service in many other countries. The directness of the relation between schools and elites is marked by the use of academic titles, definitions, and achievements in defining elite positions.

One special way in which a society may minimize an association between schools and elite entry should be emphasized. It is possible culturally to agree to view much success (especially economic success) as achieved and defined not in social institutions but vis-a-vis the natural order, or naturally-established markets. This pretense, common in the United States, automatically removes some of the power which schools might otherwise have. The schools can still be thought to provide educations which lead to success in the "natural" order, but they cannot automatically provide and define the success itself.

(4) The social legitimacy of successful elite entry: Societies differ on the extent to which success in the institutional structure is valued and seen as legitimate. If it is not greatly valued, or if it is seen as of dubious worth to anyone other than the individual obtaining it, the schools will have less power over their students' significant futures. This is a more important point than it may seem, because societies in which there is

the least potential for diffuse socialization (i.e., in which elites and non-elites are most similar) are just those societies with the greatest inclination to legitimize success. If elites are very different from ordinary members, the latter are less likely to legitimize the elites or elite entry. These two factors work against each other.

(5) The integration and unification of the market in schools: No matter how powerful a given class or system of schools is in terms of its overall ability to offer valued futures, this power is lost to each specific school if there is no integration among them. If a student, despite any particular failure, can always enter a competing school with his record almost unblemished, as has practically been the situation in the United States, then much of the power of the schools is lost. The student can reject, and anticipate rejecting, his own failure, claiming that it was produced by some undesirable features of the school itself, rather than his own inadequacy.

Thus, if there are many different kinds of schools with different and uncoordinated rules of admission, performance, and graduation, all producing products with a generally similar social definition, it will be difficult for any of them to have great power over their students. On the other hand, if admissions procedures and performance standards are highly coordinated, and if a student who fails in any one school has failed in the entire system, this monopolistic feature of the market of schools will add greatly to the influence of each individual school. That is, to the extent that the route to success within the educational institutional structure is unique and singular, each school gains power over its students.

B. The Conditions of Efforts Toward Diffuse Socialization

We have discussed above the conditions under which schools, or classes of schools, will be socially chartered with more or less power over students,

presumably to change them in various ways. Now we turn to discuss the conditions under which the influence the schools have--whatever its amount--will be directed toward creating diffuse changes in the individual. That is, under what circumstances will the schools produce the reconstitution of the students' values, needs, or personal styles of behavior? Of course, schools can greatly change students without being organized (or allocated the function) to do so. But by and large, for systematic and large-scale effects to be possible, it seems likely that those involved (students, teachers, administrators and groups outside the institution) must be aware of them as functions. The Bennington Study, for example, did not find everyone unaware of the political climate and intentions of the school. And one of the mechanisms by which the school affected its students was precisely through their awareness of valued styles of thought.

The essential societal attribute which determines whether or not schools or classes of schools will devote their power over students to attempts at diffuse changes in them is the character of the elites for which they confer membership. If these elites are defined, as typically in America, to have specific and technical functions for the society, and if their status and authority is seen to rest on this technical competence and orientation, then the schools will be chartered, in everyone's eyes, to produce it. If, however, the social status of these elites is defined in a more diffuse way, as involving competence, authority, and responsibility, over a wider range, the schools will be chartered to produce broad changes in their students. The students, the groups and communities from which they come, will all understand that the schools are inducting them into a new social world, with new styles of action, new values and virtues, and perhaps new attributes of

character. As they proceed through the schools, and year by year are given new standing, they adopt and acquire these new properties.*

Thus it happens that students in scientific or technical curricula are less broadly affected by the colleges they attend than students in the social sciences and humanities.** It is only partly the formal curricula that are involved--such things play a secondary role in these processes. It is much more what the students and others expect to be acquired in the school, and this in turn is constructed largely out of what they will become. In America, college students in the humanities and social sciences will become college graduates--members of a rather low level elite with at least some diffuse functions which are thought to require generally educated people. Students in the sciences will become engineers or chemists--members of technically-defined occupational groups.

The general idea discussed above suggests a number of more specific ones:

(1) The more a society is modernized in structure, the less diffuse will be the impact of its schools on their students. Modern societies tend to have highly differentiated, technically-defined elites, particularly in their economies, and their schools are thus chartered with creating these specific roles.

(2) The more a society is organized around economic institutions, the less diffuse will be the impact of its schools. Economic institutions are

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*For example, for studies of the relation between the broadly-defined English elite and the public schools which confer membership in it, see Rupert Wilkinson, British Leadership and the Public School Tradition, and Ian Weinberg, The English Public Schools, New York: Atherton Press, 1967.

**See Newcomb and Feldman, op. cit.

more than others, organized around technical and specific roles, especially at elite levels.

(3) The more a society places moral emphasis on status, or on ascription, in defining given elite positions, the more diffuse will be the impact of the schools. On the other hand, elite positions whose public definition is linked closely only with specific performances will not lead to emphasis, in their socialization, on producing or validating broad capabilities in the individual. Thus, societies which emphasize many features of elite class and estate--distinctive forms of expression, distinctive modes of association and recreation, distinctive tastes and consumption--will have school systems which tend to produce broader effects. Of course American society without a developed or "high" culture, and without networks of communications which form and embellish such a culture, confers exceptionally little power on its schools to create broad changes in their students.

This idea leads to a more general point:

(4) The more similar a society's elites and non-elites are in their culture and styles of action, the less diffuse will be the impact of its schools. In other words, where an elite is a separate and distinct culture, the more entry into it will be associated with taking on attributes of this culture and rejecting attributes of the mass, or tribal, or folk culture. This situation might be typical of many new and developing nations. It would be less likely in an integrated modern society; but even among modern societies there are important differences in the degree of integration of popular and elite cultures and institutions, which should be reflected in differences in the foci of the schools.

It is of course true that as elite and popular culture diverge, the former may seem increasingly illegitimate to students coming from the latter. Thus the schools may have less and less total power [see above, A(4)]. But our point here is that whatever power is available will increasingly create diffuse socialization under these "missionary-school" conditions.

C. Directions for Research

The analysis above suggests some new types of research. Present studies usually look at value changes in students in one or several American schools. We are suggesting the importance of broader comparisons, and in particular, two sorts of studies:

(1) Societies should be classified by the characteristics of their elites and by the social arrangements which lead from given classes of schools to these elites. Then the impact on student values of schools which are organizationally similar, but which exist in different types of societies should be compared. In this way it would be possible to find out, for example, whether schools have more diffuse impact on students in societies with ascriptively defined elites [B(3) above]. Because the comparison would be made between organizationally similar schools, it would isolate those effects which did not occur through the organization of the school. In this way, the research could begin to locate the distinctive impact of the charter of the schools.

(2) In the same way, within any given society it would be useful to compare the impact of schools or types of schools which are internally similar but which are differently chartered. How much difference, for example, does prestige make [related to A(1) above] independent of internal organizational resources and interaction? Or are the effects of technical schools on values

weaker than those of broader schools with similar students in similar curricula and activities [B(1) and (2) above]?

The essential characteristics of these two types of studies would be their attempt to measure, and to assess the consequences of, characteristics of social elites and of the connections of the schools with such elites. Schools would be defined in terms of what we are considering their most important resource--the right to confer socially-validated qualities upon students.

II. Organizational Conditions of Diffuse Socialization

As we noted at the outset, there is an extensive sociological literature on the internal structural features of schools (and similar organizations) which are thought to increase their effects on diffuse characteristics of students. If students are isolated from extra-organizational positions and relationships; if they are subordinated to a powerful status order built around the values of the school; if they are prevented from developing or maintaining a defensive counter-culture and indeed are integrated into a peer structure which reinforces the values of the school; and if they are involved in high rates of interaction structured around the appropriate values and with themselves acting in ways which exemplify these values; then, the students will tend to take on the values of the school. This is a much-discussed subject, and it is understood that there are a number of ways in which these effects may occur.

Essentially, the literature stresses the impact schools may have by managing the <u>present</u> experienced by the student, and by disconnecting him from the past. In this paper we concentrate on the effects schools may have

by manipulating the students' potential futures: (A) The larger social charter of the school to transform students reaches and affects the student in part through the organizational structure of the school itself. (B) This organization is constantly at work to change and redefine the charter as it is experienced by the student, and also by other members of the community. We deal, in turn, with these two specialized processes, leaving aside those which are better understood.

A. Organization Conditions as Implementing the Charter

Students do not usually have a very clear idea of where in the social and occupational structure they will be allocated. Nor do they know much about a more complex structure--the distribution of probabilities of various social futures which could be attached to them. They do not even know whether they are likely to complete the particular school or class of schools they are entering. (All these things change a little at the level of professional training. There students are more realistic about the social status they will enter, but even so there seems to be considerable unclarity about likely social circumstances--incomes, organizational settings, social contacts, style of life, and so on.)

Thus, whatever the charter which a school or class of schools may have established vis-a-vis various significant parties--legally and socially established gatekeepers, other elements of the system of schools, and even students' families--much depends on whether it can establish this same charter with its students. Unless they know how dependent they are on the school for future gains, and unless they know how widely the school's charter is accepted, much of its effect will be lost. For socialization depends heavily on the willing and motivated adoption of appropriate characteristics by the

individual, and all this depends on the (a) perceived gains the future offers, and (b) the perceived legitimacy of accepting these gains.

A school must persuade its students, then, that it can offer desired futures, and also that its right to do so is widely legitimated, so that they can in safety assume characteristics of these futures.*

Some of the classically-discussed features of socializing organizations help here. High rates of interaction around desired values and roles help convince the students that they are likely to have significant associated futures. Attractive and established role-models can demonstrate possible futures. Isolation from other social institutions combined with the equalization in status of the students at any level can help commit them to an expectation of a common future created for them by the school.

Some characteristics of schools take on changed significance when seen in terms of their capacity to implement a school's charter with its students. Prestige, for instance, which has sometimes been seen as important only because it is associated with socializing resources, becomes important in its

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*Wallace, for example, finds sharp changes in the freshmen he studied in their first few months of college. Many more planned to engage in graduate study than planned to do so upon entry into the college. Wallace finds this shift is sharper among the freshmen who interact with upperclassmen (who, by and large, plan on graduate study). He interprets it as peer group influence, but this may play a secondary and mediating role. What is happening may be that the freshmen are finding out from the upperclassmen what the charter of the school is, and how it is to be implemented. Fellow students could be important as additional examples of the charter, not a source of intrinsically-valued influence. See Walter Wallace, Student Culture, Chicago: Aldine, 1966. Becker and his colleagues clearly conceive of the peer culture as helping students to adapt to medical school and to retain their highly-valued futures. See Becker et al., op. cit., and Howard S. Becker and Blanche Geer, "Fate of idealism in medical school," American Sociological Review, 23,(1958), pp. 50-56, and "Student culture in medical school," Harvard Educational Review, 28,(1958), pp. 70-80.

own right. Prestigious schools can offer students both general status gains and the knowledge that these gains will be legitimated at many points in the system.

The social isolation of students from positions and relationships outside the school, which has commonly been seen as an aid to diffuse socialization, has important defects in its impact on the implementation of the charter. Unable to see themselves and their changes from outside the school, and unable to discover by interaction and experience their changing value and how much the outside world legitimates their internal changes, isolated students must always entertain the hypothesis that their experience is all a game, and that it has little meaning so far as the future is concerned. This idea, privately or publicly held, greatly weakens the impact of the school's charter. To combat it, isolated schools must constantly dramatize the successful career lines which they claim to open up--calling attention to successful alumni, and so on.

Small schools face problems similar to those of isolated schools. Again our reasoning is at odds with the common emphasis in this field, on the virtues of small institutions in socialization. Precisely because they are involved in a network of interpersonal relationships rather than in a massive and formal status structure, students are less certain of the significance to the outside world of the steps through which they are passing. They see less clearly the formal status of their teachers in the outside world. Courses curricula and majors seem more personal--more associated with particular tastes and particular teachers--and less connected with established career lines. As with isolated schools, students in smaller schools (if everything else is held constant) are torn between the idea that their particular

college experience is a central part of their development (i.e., is externally validated) and the thought that it is all a game. Large schools tend to be more convincing. Courses, requirements and curricula are more formal and impersonal. It would seem unreasonable to students to believe that such a massive institutional apparatus is not well connected to futures which are validated by the wider status order. In other words, large schools, by virtue of their size, impersonality, and bureaucratization, may seem to the students to have more valid charters than small ones.

It should not be ignored here, of course, that most of the other processes by which school size might affect diffuse socialization operate the other way from ours (i.e., such schools can involve students more and make them more dependent)--they suggest small schools might be more effective. We are not denying that those processes operate, but simply suggesting an additional one which runs counter to them.*

The organization of the internal career: Whatever future a school is chartered to confer on its successful graduates it faces a choice about when to confer it. If the school chooses to admit large numbers of students and to graduate only a few, then the future status of the graduates tends to be conferred only upon completion of their programs. Each student is made

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*Kamens, in a major study of the contextual sources of college dropout, finds substantial evidence related to this point. He shows that, holding the general quality of a college constant, small colleges tend to produce more dropout among students with any given background than larger colleges. This finding runs counter to most sociological thinking on the point and is of great interest. See David H. Kamens, Institutional Stratification and Student Commitment: College Effects on Dropout, unpublished doctoral dissertation, Columbia University, 1968, especially Chap. 3. Also see his "College size and student commitment," Russell B. Stearns Study, Northeastern University, 1968.

unsure about his relation to the charter of the school--whether he is going to be one of the few who succeed or one of the many who fail.

On the other hand, if the school admits only a few students, and graduates almost all of them, then the charter of the school tends to become attached to the students early in their career. They are marked out from their other peers at the start and share a common future with their classmates.*

It is possible to argue that either of these kinds of systems would have greater impact on the student. The competitive system, in which many are admitted but few succeed, establishes in one sense great power over its students. Their success in improving their degree of conformity to the requirements of the system carries a potentially maximal pay-off. A whole career line depends on their acceptance of socialization. On the other hand, this system has great defects as a socializer. Each student must hedge his commitment--if it gets too high, failure would be too costly, and failure is a very realistic possibility. So in protecting himself, each student tends to adopt as behaviors and orientations a set of characteristics which represent a realistic combination of the probable futures which at that moment attach to him. This is also made necessary by his relationships with peers and others, who also understand his high probability of failure, and who would regard over-eager attempts on his part to adopt the charter of the

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*The distinction between these kinds of systems corresponds in part to Turner's distinction between sponsored and contest mobility. See Ralph Turner, "Modes of social ascent through education: sponsored and contest mobility," in A. H. Halsey et al., eds., Education, Economy and Society, New York: Free Press, 1961. But there is no evidence that the organizing principles Turner discusses are closely related to systems and rates of admission and graduation.

school illegitimate grasping and aping of his betters. In this way, the peer culture tends to resist the pressures of the institutions.*

On the other hand, in a school where a student is given a high probability of success upon entry, adoption of the chartered attributes by the student tends to be safer and more legitimate, even though the school itself might have lost some power over him by having so greatly reduced the scarcity of the success it offers. The student knows that he is set apart by virtue of his admission, and that it is both safe and proper in the eyes of peers and relatives to begin to take on the qualities of the positions to which he is being given entry. In such schools, it is also true that the student or peer culture tends to reinforce each student's adoption of the charter.

The internal provision of opportunities to act: Even if a school is clearly chartered to confer many broad changes on its students, it makes a great deal of difference whether or not the students have opportunities to act and interact on the basis of the qualities they are to assume. If they have such opportunities to act and interact, they are of course much more likely to assume the appropriate qualities, and by complying, to control the

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*Thus Stinchcombe finds that high school students who do not intend to pursue future careers which require high school graduation tend to resist and decline to legitimate high school rules and requirements. See Arthur Stinchcombe, Rebellion in a High School, Quadrangle Books, 1964. It is possible to argue that the general resistance of peer groups to efforts at broad socialization which American researchers find arises precisely because such broad socialization is not and cannot be legitimated on the basis of the social futures toward which the students are moving. See, for example, James Coleman, Adolescent Society, New York: Free Press, 1961. If this interpretation is taken, student culture is seen as helping the student maintain his career line in the face of relatively arbitrary pressures from the school. This is the view taken, of course, in the Becker medical school studies, op. cit. It is also discussed by Ralph Turner, The Social Context of Ambition, San Francisco: Chandler, 1964.

behavior of other students. One of the difficulties with very prestigious universities in America and elsewhere is that students are chartered with great prestige and future success but little present opportunity to adopt these qualities in action because of the size of the school, the distraction of the faculty, and the scarcity of opportunities to act per talented and chartered student. Faced with this situation, they often construct their own networks of action around political orientations and around peripheral student organizations and educational ventures.

B. Organizational Conditions as Constructing the Charter

We have discussed the cases in which schools have broad social authority and legitimacy to confer massive changes on students. Now we turn to discuss the areas in which schools have little by way of such a charter. For example, most of the over two thousand American colleges and universities have little distinctive standing with the law and various other publics through which to transform students. Thus an average school which is trying to assume some larger power over the lives of its students must do so with the force, not of a public charter, but of its own internal structures. This can happen in many ways, which are extensively discussed in the literature. But one process by which it can happen is through the construction by the school in the minds of its students of a charter which is in fact not socially validated. That is, the school can create a picture of an outside world which expects, legitimates, and has distinctive career lines to organize, the unique features with which the school can endow its graduates.

In order to create this picture in the minds of students when in fact its charter is narrow and similar to that of other schools, a school must have some of the features which have sometimes been thought of, probably

erroneously, as requisites of any kind of diffuse organizational socialization. It should be isolated, socially and perhaps physically, so the contrast between the internal description of their status and future and that obtaining in the outside world will not overwhelm students. It must have very high rates of internal interaction, so as to construct and sustain without external support a novel definition of reality. It needs to control the norms of the student culture which are a potential source of skepticism. And it needs, at least to some extent, a distinctive ideology to justify without much cultural support the changes it claims to be producing in the characters of the students.

Schools without institutionalized charters also need an ideological base to support the idea that the broad changes they are producing in students will lead these students to success in society even if their significance is not acknowledged by the society. If a school is built around a slightly distinctive moral perspective, it can claim that the virtues it inculcates will lead its alumni, by a structurally mysterious or invisible career line, to success. A school in this situation is trying to base its charter in part on some other moral authority than that of the society itself. Religious schools and some politicized schools have this quality.

All these characteristics of schools are linked together, particularly in societies which do not commonly charter schools to greatly remold students. Thus, among the great majority of American colleges which are not distinctively chartered, those which aim at broadly changing students emphasize social isolation, high rates of interaction, and the long-run significance for the success of present students and past alumni of the virtues of character they claim to produce.

Causal processes here do not move only in one direction--from the design or interest of the college to its actual structure. It is also true that small and isolated schools with high rates of internal interaction tend to create in their students the belief that personal attributes are being constructed in them which will have long-run significance, and which may even be recognized--that is, chartered--by influential gatekeepers in the wider world. In small schools with little reknown in which students are isolated from the career lines they hope to follow, and uncertain about the degree to which their educations will actually entitle them to entry, the larger beliefs about the moral significance of their educations are almost essential balancing mechanisms if they are to retain their commitment. Of course, many students in such schools do not retain their membership in the face of this situation.* The required faith may be too much to accept and maintain.

C. Some Research Possibilities

Research on the problems discussed above is made more difficult by the fact that a number of different processes connect the variables--suggesting different kinds of relationships between them. Distinguishing these empirically becomes a problem. But two types of studies can be suggested as relatively unambiguous:

(1) The charter of schools or systems of schools should greatly affect the relationships between the size or structural isolation of a school and diffuse changes in its students. Research should distinguish schools (or societies) on the basis of the extent to which their social charters involve diffuse socialization. We argue that the size and isolation of a school

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*Kamens, op. cit.

should be a much more important determinant of diffuse socialization in the absence of such charters.

(2) Researchers can investigate directly the student's perception of the charter of his school. Under what organizational conditions will students (in schools with given charters in fact) be more likely to believe that they are being allocated distinctive futures in the social order? Here the dependent variable is not value change, but student beliefs about the properties of the "alumnus," both in reality and as socially acknowledged. Do students <u>of given qualities</u> see themselves as having futures involving broader leadership rights if they attend more prestigious schools, or schools involving them in more intense interaction? And if they have these views, do they acquire them early in their period of membership, suggesting the adaptation to a charter by the student, rather than what is traditionally seen as socialization?*

III. Conclusion

We conceive of schools or classes of schools as possessing <u>charters</u>--institutionalized social definitions of their products. Schools will be more able to create broad changes in the values or attributes of their students if their charters give them the right and power to (a) greatly elevate the social standing of the students and to (b) move them into diffusely defined social positions. Obviously, then, the capacity of a school to change students is greatly dependent on the wider society in which it exists and which charters it. In the United States, for example, specific schools

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*W. Wallace, <u>op. cit.</u>

have less power to control the future standing of their students than is the case in other societies. Further, schools are chartered more to confer occupational and technical future roles on their students than to confer membership in broadly-defined elites. Thus, American schools are likely to be peculiarly weak in their ability to broadly transform students in comparison to schools of similar internal structure in other societies.

The impact of the charter of a school is partly mediated for a student by his information and social relations outside the school--family, friends, community, and mass media. But partly it is transmitted by the organizational structure of the school itself, which can more or less convincingly provide for him the kind of futures which lead him to change in diffuse ways. Sometimes it is even possible for schools to construct broad charters in the minds of their students when the social validity of these charters is weak or non-existent. In part this explains the emphasis, in American education, on broad socialization as occurring under stringent conditions of isolation and control.